



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020

No. 12

Senate

The Senate met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are our rock and fortress. Keep us from dishonor. Only by walking in Your precepts can our lawmakers remain within the circle of Your protection and blessings. Lord, turn their ears to listen to Your admonition, as You infuse them with the courage to obey Your commands. We have trusted You since the birth of this land we love. That is why we will declare Your glory as long as we have breath. Lord, as our Senators prepare to gather for today's impeachment trial, we declare that You alone are our hope.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The majority leader is recognized.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last Thursday, the U.S. Senate crossed one of the greatest thresholds that exist in our system of government. We began just the third Presidential impeachment trial in American history. This is a unique responsibility which the

Framers of our Constitution knew that the Senate—and only the Senate—could handle. Our Founders trusted the Senate to rise above short-term passions and factionalism. They trusted the Senate to soberly consider what has actually been proven and which outcome best serves the Nation. That is a pretty high bar, and you might say that later today, this body will take our entrance exam.

Today, we will consider and pass an organizing resolution that will structure the first phase of the trial. This initial step will offer an early signal to our country. Can the Senate still serve our founding purpose? Can we still put fairness, evenhandedness, and historical precedent ahead of the partisan passions of the day? Today's vote will contain some answers. The organizing resolution we will put forward already has the support of a majority of the Senate. That is because it sets up a structure that is fair, evenhanded, and tracks closely with past precedents that were established unanimously.

After pretrial business, the resolution establishes the four things that need to happen next. First, the Senate will hear an opening presentation from the House managers. Second, we will hear from the President's counsel. Third, Senators will be able to seek further information by posing written questions to either side through the Chief Justice. Fourth, with all that information in hand, the Senate will consider whether we feel any additional evidence or witnesses are necessary to evaluate whether the House case has cleared or failed to clear the high bar of overcoming the presumption of innocence and undoing a democratic election.

The Senate's fair process will draw a sharp contrast with the unfair and precedent-breaking inquiry that was carried on by the House of Representatives. The House broke with precedent by denying Members of the Republican minority the same rights that Demo-

crats had received when they were in the minority back in 1998. Here in the Senate, every single Senator will have exactly the same rights and exactly the same ability to ask questions.

The House broke with fairness by cutting President Trump's counsel out of their inquiry to an unprecedented degree. Here in the Senate, the President's lawyers will finally receive a level playing field with the House Democrats and will finally be able to present the President's case. Finally, some fairness.

On every point, our straightforward resolution will bring the clarity and fairness that everyone deserves—the President of the United States, the House of Representatives, and the American people. This is the fair roadmap for our trial. We need it in place before we can move forward, so the Senate should prepare to remain in session today until we complete this resolution and adopt it.

This basic, four-part structure aligns with the first steps of the Clinton impeachment trial in 1999. Twenty-one years ago, 100 Senators agreed unanimously that this roadmap was the right way to begin the trial. All 100 Senators agreed the proper time to consider the question of potential witnesses was after—after—opening arguments and Senators' questions.

Now, some outside voices have been urging the Senate to break with precedent on this question. Loud voices, including the leadership of the House majority, colluded with Senate Democrats and tried to force the Senate to precommit ourselves to seek specific witnesses and documents before Senators had even heard opening arguments or even asked questions. These are potential witnesses whom the House managers themselves—themselves—declined to hear from, whom the House itself declined to pursue through the legal system during its own inquiry.

The House was not facing any deadline. They were free to run whatever

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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